

# Info Note

## Capacitating Science-Policy dialogue platforms to trigger actions for accessing climate finance: experiences and lessons learnt from Ghana, Mali and Niger

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### Key messages

- Adequate financial resources are key barriers limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of the science-policy dialogue platforms.
- A structured engagement and capacity building approach was implemented to strengthen resource mobilization capacity of the science-policy dialogue platforms in Ghana, Mali and Niger
- The approach has enabled the development of three GCF concept notes and two bilateral donor proposals for accessing climate finance.
- The structured engagement and capacity building approach adopted was instrumental in triggering actions
- The strong commitment and leadership of the institutions hosting the secretariat of the platforms were also crucial in triggering actions.

### 1. Introduction

In West Africa, agriculture is central to the livelihoods of millions of people, yet many agriculture-dependent households remain food insecure and malnourished. The increased frequency of climate-induced production shocks have made it increasingly difficult to maintain positive per capita food production growth over the longer term. Low productivity, combined with increasingly frequent food production failures, point to the need to significantly raise the efforts to increasing the productive capacity and strengthening the resilience of rural households in

the region. Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) has the potential to (1) sustainably increase agricultural productivity to support equitable increases in incomes, food security and development; (2) adapt and building resilience to climate change from the farm to national levels; and (3) develop opportunities to reduce GHG emissions from agriculture (Lipper et al., 2014). As an integrated approach to managing landscapes that addresses the interlinked challenges of food security and accelerating climate change, CSA aims to support integrating climate change into the planning and implementation of sustainable agricultural strategies across scales.

Since 2012, the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) in West Africa has supported the creation and operation of national science-policy dialogue platforms on CSA in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal (Zougmore et al., 2019). The multi-stakeholder platforms were established to promote the use of scientific evidence in order to create awareness on climate change impacts on agriculture and make recommendations on the mainstreaming of climate change and CSA into agricultural development plans (Zougmore et al., 2019). While there are evidences of the platforms' effectiveness in engaging decision-makers and mainstreaming climate change into development plans (Sam et al., 2021, Zougmore et al., 2019), inadequate funding has been a major constraint to platform effectiveness and sustainability (Djido et al., 2021; Sam et al., 2021). Building and strengthening platforms capacities for resource mobilization is critical and therefore highly recommended.

This Info Note documents the outcomes of and lessons learnt from capacity building activities to science-policy dialogue platforms in Ghana, Mali and Niger and how the capacity building program empowered the platforms and/or triggered actions for accessing climate finance.

## 2. Capacitating science policy platforms: Overview

As part of the “Enabling institutions and policies for sustainable climate change governance in agriculture” project, CCAFS West Africa team designed a capacity building program to strength resource mobilization capacity of science-policy dialogue platforms in Ghana, Mali and Niger. Specifically, it aimed to build the capacity of the science-policy dialogue platform’s members in designing bankable projects eligible for international climate finance and funds. By strengthening capacity of key stakeholders in the science-policy dialogue platforms to develop bankable and eligible projects, and access international climate finance, the activity is expected to contribute to the promotion of Climate-Smart Agriculture and low-emission climate-resilient development pathways in agricultural sector in the three countries.

A 5-day modular training program was designed, with a focus on the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the world’s largest climate fund, mandated to support developing countries raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways<sup>1</sup>.

- Module 1 provided a detailed understanding of the GCF operational policies and procedures.
- Module 2 focused on the understanding and the elaboration of a logical framework for a GCF concept note, defining result areas and choosing a suitable Accredited Entity (AE).
- Module 3 focused on key requirements of the GCF, with an emphasis on the GCF Investment Framework.
- Module 4 focused on the implementation arrangements, ensuring stakeholder engagement, complying with regulatory requirements, and carrying out risk analysis;
- Module 5 discussed the various steps in submitting a concept note to the GCF and the subsequent steps in developing a full funding proposal following approval of the concept note.

To implement the capacity building program, a ‘learning by doing’ and participatory approach, which gives room for both theory and practice, was adopted and implemented in a 5-day training workshop in each of the three

countries. After an interactive and participatory presentation at the beginning of each module, a breakout group work was held, where the knowledge acquired in the module was applied to specific and contextual examples. This encouraged greater participation and engagement.

## 3. Key Results and Outcomes

### 3.1. Ghana

In Ghana, 20 stakeholders, members of the Ghana platform, participated in the training workshop (Figure 1). The participants represented various institutions including CSIR-ARI, CSIR-STEPRI, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ministry of Finance (the National Designated Authority – NDA in Ghana), Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, University of Cape Coast, Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet).



Figure 1. Participants during the training workshop in Ghana

Two key outcomes resulted from the training workshop: (i) a draft proposal and (ii) a road map for its submission, as a concept note, to the GCF. Following the training workshop, the Ghana platform convened a task-force technical meeting to finalise the draft proposal developed during the training. The task-force also identified an Accredited Entity (AE) for the submission of the concept note to the GCF. The proposal aims to enhance the resilience of rural agricultural households to threats of climate variability and change in the forest degradation frontier in the transitional agroecological zone of Ghana. With a total estimated budget of US\$36 million, the proposal will harness previous CCAFS innovative research and will up-scale proven CSA technologies to improve the resilience of vulnerable groups while contributing to agriculture sector’s GHG emission reduction.

To ensure that the concept note is endorsed by relevant national stakeholders and consistent with national priorities, a key GCF submission requirement, the Ghana platform organized a stakeholder engagement workshop<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2). During the workshop, key components of the draft concept note were shared with stakeholders for their inputs and endorsement. The participants highlighted the alignment of the concept note with national priorities on climate change, particularly the need to improve the lives and livelihoods of farmers and vulnerable groups while maintaining ecosystem sustainability. Participants were

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.graphic.com.gh/business/business-news/climate-actors-assess-solutions-to-finance-climate-change.html>



from FAO, Ministry of Finance (the NDA), Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, MoFA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet), Fisheries Commission, University of Cape Coast, CSIR among others.

With the support of CCAFS, the Ghana platform's concept note has been reviewed and revised by an external climate finance expert to ensure its alignment with GCF investment criteria. The final step is the submission the improved concept note to the GCF through the NDA.



*Figure 2. Participants of the stakeholder engagement workshop in Ghana*

### 3.2. Mali

In Mali, a slightly different approach was adopted by the platform in order to target both national and international funding sources. Prior to the implementation of the training program, the Mali platform, with CCAFS support, organized a series of stakeholder mobilization workshops to engage bilateral donors and development cooperation agencies operating in Mali (Figure 3). The goal was to engage with the various organizations to identify windows of opportunities available as well as key priority thematic areas. This would help to secure interest and commitment for funding before submission of proposals to these bilateral donors and development cooperation agencies operating in Mali. A task-force was set up by the Mali platform to lead the overall process for the development of proposals. The series of workshop was attended by participants from UN organisations (UNDP, MINUSMA, UN Women), SNV, GIZ, Enabel (Belgium Development Agency), Embassies of Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, British and Denmark in Mali (Figure 4).

The overall engagement process resulted in two key outcomes. The first is the development of a holistic and integrated program, the "Total Resilience" Initiative, to build resilience to socioeconomic and environmental shocks, including climate change-related risks. Ultimately, the program aims to improve the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable communities while strengthening peace and social cohesion in the central part of Mali. The program aims to be longterm with thematic components that can

be funded by different donors depending on their thematic priorities and strategic agendas.



*Figure 3. Participants during the training workshop in Mali*



*Figure 4. Workshop with donors (embassies of Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Canada, Belgium and Denmark) in Mali*

The second outcome is the commitments of the MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) and UNEP (Environment and Climate Change cluster) to support components of the "Total Resilience" Initiative. A proposal was subsequently developed and submitted to the MINUSMA as part of its mission of supporting the stabilization and restoration of state authority in the central part of Mali. With a total budget of US\$ 612000, the main aim of the project is to strengthen social cohesion and stabilization in the regions of central Mali through the revitalization of village and municipal land commissions, including the sustainable management of natural resources.

After the implementation of the training, a draft concept note was developed. The goal of the proposal is to contribute to methane emission reductions in rice and livestock value chains in southern Mali. It aims to upscale methane emission reduction practices in rice cropping systems and livestock production systems while building resilience of smallholder farmers. It specifically evisions to build resilience through adoption and upscaling of GHG mitigation practices in agriculture.

At the end of the training program, a road map of actions required for the submission of the concept note to the GCF has been developed and agreed among all the participants. In addition, the platform secretariat committed to pursue resource mobilization actions to ensure the sustainability of the platform. New skills and knowledge acquired during the training will be crucial in designing future eligible and bankable proposals. Lessons learnt from the stakeholder engagement process will also be used to engage with other bilateral donors operating in the country. Furthermore, the AEDD, the Mali NDA which host the platform secretariat committed itself to strengthen the institutional anchoring of the platform and to dedicate a budget line for the platform in the annual AEDD budget.

### 3.3. Niger

In Niger, about 20 participants from the various institutions members of the Niger platforms attended the training workshop (Figure 5). The CNEED, which ensures the secretariat of the platform and is also the Niger NDA, convened the workshop. The main outcome of the training in Niger was a draft concept note developed during the workshop.



Figure 5. Participants during the training workshop in Niger

Following the training workshop, the Niger platform organized a 5-day writeshop to further develop the draft proposal into a full concept note (Figure 6). The writeshop gathered together selected experts who participated in the training and also received previous training on proposal development supported by CCAFS in 2020. The concept note aimed to promote CSA innovations and technologies to address the socio-ecological challenges in oasis basins in South-East Niger. With an estimated budget of US\$ 24.5 million, the proposal will contribute to improving the resilience of vulnerable communities in the oasis basins in South-East Niger.

In addition to the main outcome, the 'learning by doing' and participatory approach was very useful according to the participants in Niger. It helped apply the new knowledge and skills acquired to specific and contextual examples while the training is still ongoing. At institutional level, the training program not only strengthened the skills

and expertises of the pool of experts of CNEDD (the NDA) in developing GCF concept note but also equipped them with key skills for assessing future concept note submitted to the CNEDD for endorsement. Based on the new knowledge and skills acquired during the training, the participants are confident of being able to support and assist their institutions, as well as other organizations (such as local NGOs), in developing proposals for resource mobilization beyond the GCF.

As next steps, the CNEED, which hosts the secretariat of the platform and is also the NDA of Niger, will organize a stakeholder engagement workshop with all relevant stakeholders with interests in the proposed proposal; identify an appropriate AE, and submit the concept note to the GCF through the AE.



Figure 6. Participants of the writeshop in Dosso, Niger

## 4. Concluding remarks

Adequate financial resources are key barriers limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of the science-policy dialogue platforms in mainstreaming climate change and CSA into agricultural development plans. Key lessons learnt from a capacity building program to strengthen resource mobilization capacity of the science-policy dialogue platforms in Ghana, Mali and Niger are highlighted below.

- The structured engagement and capacity building approach adopted was instrumental in triggering actions. With a clear end goal in mind, the approach goes beyond standard participatory training. The approach rather puts strong emphasis on the application of the new knowledge and skills in real life contexts in order to achieve the end goal. This learning-by-doing approach encouraged greater participation and engagement and enabled the application of new knowledge and skills simultaneously while the training was still on-going. In addition, it enabled the identification of a set of concrete actions to achieve the end goal. For example, a roadmap with sets of actions for



finalization and submission of the concept note emerged as the training went on.

- The strong commitment and leadership of the institutions hosting the secretariat of the platforms were crucial in triggering actions. While the structured approach enabled identification of actions to achieve the end goal, only commitment and leadership of the platforms could facilitate turning opportunities into actions. This is exemplified by the Ghana platform, where the platform leadership immediately got in touch with the NDA to discuss the submission process, and seized the opportunity to organize the stakeholder engagement workshop. In Mali, the commitment and leadership of the platform secretariat was also instrumental. The Mali platform used a slightly different approach or entry point in order to harness funding opportunities available in the country. Acting on this contextual opportunity has helped to secure some funding before the implementation of the training program.

## Further reading

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